During all these meetings, the two sides undertook a comprehensive review of bilateral relations between India and the Russian Federation in trade, economic, scientific, technological, cultural and defence spheres. Both sides expressed their satisfaction over the positive developments in cooperation between the two countries in recent years in all these areas.

Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

3900. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India expressed its shock and outrage at the United States decision to oppose seven years of sustained efforts to cobble a multilateral protocol to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention;

(b) if so, whether this led to collpase of the talks among 144 countries;

(c) whether India has declared US move as unacceptable;

(d) if so, whether India was among 143 countries that worked hard to arrive at the BTWC protocol; and

(e) Government's reaction on the US stand on this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (e) On 25 July 2001, during the last scheduled meeting of the Ad hoc Group set up in 1994 to negotiate a Verification Protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), the US Government stated that, after an internal review, it had come to the conclusion that the mechanisms envisioned for the Protocol would not achieve their objectives, that no modification of them would allow them to achieve their objectives, and that trying to do more would simply raise the risk to legitimate United States activities. Though the US Government also said that it intended to explore other ideas and alternative approaches in the coming months, this announcement implied an end to the work of the Ad hoc Group.

The Review Conference attended by 144 States Parties of the BTWC, held in November-December 2001 in Geneva, was unable to resolve the issue and was adjourned till November, 2002 when it would reconvene to resume its work.

India supports efforts aimed at strengthening the BTWC. India alongwith the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has regretted the rejection of the draft Protocol. NAM has also emphasised the continued validity of the mandate given to the Ad hoc Group, and underlined that the BTWC needs to be strengthened through a non-discriminatory legally-binding instrument to be negotiated multilaterally within the framework of the Convention.

Long term labour intensive industrial development Plan

3901. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are formulating a long terms labour intensive industrial development plan for reducing unemployment in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) and (b) The strategy for Employment generation is part of the five year plans. The approach to the Tenth Plan focusses on providing gainful high quality employment to the additions to the labour force and it is listed as one of the monitorable objectives for the 10th Plan and beyond. The growth strategy of the 10th Plan would lay emphasis on rapid growth of those sectors which are likely to create high quality employment opportunities and deal with the policy constraints which discourage the growth of employment. Particular attention would be paid to the policy environment influencing a wide range of economic activities which have a large employment potential.